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***AFGHANISTAN
PARLIAMENTARY
ASSISTANCE PROJECT***

QUARTERLY REPORT

For the period January 1 – March 31, 2005

Task Order No. DFD-I-800-04-00128-00

**Submitted to the United States Agency for International Development
USAID Mission/Afghanistan**

**Prepared by Center for International Development
State University of New York**

INTRODUCTION

In November 2004, USAID Afghanistan contracted the services of the State University of New York's Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) to provide technical assistance and guidance on legislative strengthening and parliamentary development in Afghanistan. The goal of the contract is provision of required technical and logistical assistance in the successful establishment of a functional, independent National Assembly of Afghanistan, as contemplated in the newly adopted Afghan Constitution. The Project name is the Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Program ((APAP) and is referenced as such in this report.

The following is the technical quarterly report for Task Order No. DFD-I-800-04-00128. It covers the period from January 1st to March 31, 2005.

PART 1: PROGRESS ON OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Conduct an assessment of the political, legal, and administrative environment for establishing a new Afghan National Assembly.

APAP arranged a visit for Mr. Sean Hall to review and assess the new temporary offices of the National Assembly Directors. The Directors meet with Mr. Hall and discussed with him the need for the new offices.

APAP, French representatives and UNDP also visited the temporary offices of the Directors and met with them to discuss their additional needs. All parties agreed to study the additional needs of the Directors and to assist the temporary National Assembly offices to enable them to do their daily work in proper way.

The APAP office in Kabul hosted a meeting with the Directors of the National Assembly and Mr. Kawon Kaker, the President's advisor in Parliamentary Affairs. The meeting focused on future coordination between the APAP and the National Assembly and on the possibilities of meeting the needs of the Directors for temporary offices. Mr. Kaker appreciated the assistance of USAID/SUNY in providing the office space and expressed his desire that the friendly coordination between APAP and the Assembly remain in place for the benefit of the country.

Objective 2: Provide technical assistance to Assembly preparatory process (Ongoing)

- During the first three months of the project, APAP was able to establish and channels of coordination, information exchanges, and working relationship with several local NGO's, institutions and international organizations. Several meetings took place between the APAP and other Afghan institutions and organizations

such as ART, Afghan Women's Network (AWN), to introduce the APAP and to explore the possibilities of coordination in all fields. Local organizations showed a great interest to establish a working relationship with our project and to participate jointly with APAP in many areas such as IT, capacity building, public awareness, media, publications, producing educational TV programs, TV, Radio Interviews, and radio episodes.

- Upon the request of the Secretary General, APAP works almost on a daily basis with the Directors and the Secretary General to facilitate the preparation of establishing the Secretariat of the Assembly.
- APAP participated in the monthly meetings hosted by AWN and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Several meetings with AWN, to discuss gender training related to women and parliamentary awareness including the role of Afghan women in politics, the Assembly elections, and how women can participate in the forthcoming elections.
- APAP attended conference of women participation in the parliamentary election organized by AWC (Afghan Women Council)
- APAP in coordination with the Assembly Directors have reviewed and finalized the management structure of the main departments of the Assembly.
- Upon request of the Assembly Directors, APAP assisted in finalizing the job descriptions of the Finance, Human resources, Media and public relation, and Parliamentary Affairs Departments. The management structures and the job descriptions were approved by the Civil Service Commission.
- APAP visited and continues in coordination with the Assembly Directors the visits to the former Parliament building in order to follow up the renovation progress and identify the basic needs of each department and to study and evaluate the office space available.
- APAP continues coordinating with UNDP and the Afghan Ministry of Housing to provide technical assistance to the Ministry in the building renovation. Upon request of the Minister of Housing, and with the presence of the Assembly Directors, APAP was asked to attend all technical meetings related to the renovation of the former Parliament building in order to provide IT and technical assistance when it's needed.
- APAP and the Director of Security department visited one of the international security companies (SSSI) located in Kabul. The company provided the Director with all information needed to establish a security system and explained what equipment, tools, and machines needed to have a functional operational security department. A field visit to the former Parliament building was arranged with the SSSI, the Company has studied the location and will submit a complete proposal

on security system, types of training needed, necessary equipment and tools required to activate this department

- With the approval of USAID and SUNY/ARD, APAP provided temporary office space for the Directors and their staff. The Assembly has signed the contract and APAP covered the rent for the first six months period. The APAP also assisted the Assembly Directors by providing the furniture and equipment needed for their offices including desks for the Directors, desks for assistants, chairs, book shelves, filing cabinets, meeting table and guest chairs.
- Computers, laptops, copier, fax, scanners, printers, stabilizers and heaters were provided to the temporary offices of the Assembly Directors

Objective 3: Design legislative strengthening strategy and program activities (Ongoing)

PC training for the Assembly Directors

Upon the request of the Assembly Directors, APAP organized a 30 days computer course to refresh and enhance the Director's skills in using Windows XP and Internet. All Directors successfully completed the PC training and received certificates at the end of the training period.

Supplies and Inventory

APAP assisted the Administrative Affairs Department in designing the necessary electronic forms for the supplies and inventory units within the Assembly to enable the electronic recording of the materials and various equipment from donors and to assist in tracking the equipment available in the Assembly buildings, and to identify the locations and users of equipment.

Assembly Web Site

Based on agreement with the French and UNDP, APAP worked very closely with the Assembly Directors in selecting the main elements of the Web Site according to IPU guidelines of developing an Assembly Website. APAP began design of the front page/menu of the Web Site in close collaboration with the directors and continues to work on the main component of the website.

Finance

Upon the request of the Secretary General, APAP worked closely with the Director of Finance in the Assembly to finalize the budget process for the Secretariat. APAP, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and Assembly, provided the technical assistance required to formulate the budget process for the Assembly. Excel files were developed and submitted to the Ministry of Finance, allowing electronic preparation of the Assembly budget. The budget was approved by the Minister of Finance.

Human Resources

APAP has started designing a database for the Human Resources Department. It contains all necessary information about employees, history, salaries, allowances, promotion, termination, a complete record on each Assembly staff member. The main page was completed and feedback, from the Secretariat is expected very soon to enable the APAP to complete this database according to the Afghan Assembly needs.

SUNY/APAP Activities Work plan

APAP submitted the work plan January, 2005 to USAID, CTO Mr. Sean Hall, the French, UNDP and the Assembly Directors. The response from Mr. Hall was positive and he agreed to the plans so long as there is no duplication with the French training plan. APAP did not receive any comments from the French.

APAP also discussed the work plan with the Assembly Directors. The response was very positive and supportive of implementation.

Objective 4: Implement program to establish and develop a strong, independent, and effective Assembly.

Program activities started as mentioned above (see Objective 2, above); APAP is implementing the activities according to the work plan.

PART 2: DONOR COORDINATION

- The APAP attended and continues to attend the regular weekly donor meetings with the French and UNDP. The French are designated as the lead donor nation.
- The APAP has participated in all donors meetings to discuss the UNDP framework of the Support for Establishing the Afghan Legislature (SEAL) Project. Periodical meetings took place particularly with the French, UNDP and UNAMA to finalize the SEAL work plan and to identify the main activities of each donor's activities. The SEAL work plan was finalized and submitted by the French on 7 February.
- APAP attends regular meeting with UNDP to strengthen the coordination and cooperation levels between UNDP, APAP, France and other donors.
- APAP attends regular meeting with The French group and UNDP to set up priorities of activities for the Assembly.
- APAP coordinates closely with the French Parliamentary Advisor to schedule the services and assistance that should be provided the Assembly. APAP also exchanges ideas on activities and methods to coordinate with the Assembly Directors.
- APAP attended the SEAL signing ceremony. The French Ambassador, the President of the Civil Service Commission, the Assembly Directors, and officials of UNDP and other donors also participated. After the ceremony the Assembly Directors, Civil Service Office and the President's Advisor on Parliamentary

affairs expressed their concern that the USAID project was not mentioned, despite the many useful contributions it is making to the Assembly's development.

- APAP attended the SEAL conference in Paris on March 29. Presentations by the Secretariat included acknowledgement of USAID's role in moving forward with the National Assembly staff needs and Assembly needs.

PART 3: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The APAP was not registered in Afghanistan as the registration process was not operable.

PART 4: NEXT QUARTER PLANS

The main objectives over the next quarter are completion of as many activities mentioned below to complete the deliverables under the work plan. The main activities for the following three months are as follows:

1. Two consultants to work with the Assembly Directors in developing manuals, procedures and policies in the jurisdiction of the Departments of Parliamentary Affairs, Media and Public Relation, Finance, Human Resources and Fiscal.
2. Study tour to the secretary general, his deputy and directors to Indian Parliament
3. Assist the Assembly in establishing the research and library offices.
4. Coordinate with the Secretariat in establishing a training center
5. Assist and participate in the French training programs in several areas.
6. IT assistance to help the Secretariat design the Assembly IT system. Assistance in developing needed databases.
7. Continue working with Departments in developing their capacity building
8. Continue technical assistance to the Finance Department and the Media Department
9. Begin the Public Advocacy elements of the work plan
10. Assist the NGOs in their efforts to educate the nation regarding the Assembly

PART 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

On January 15, 2005 the APAP team which consisted of the Senior Legislative Technical Advisor, IT specialist, Translator/ Gender Coordinator, Finance/Office Manager and the Admin. Assistant moved to the APAP office in the Wazir Akbar Khan in Kabul. Furnishing and equipping the office was one of the priorities of the APAP project to enable the project team to operate and function properly. All equipment and furniture needed for the office and the green house were procured according to USAID/SUNY regulations, and recorded on the SUNY inventory list and installed.

The Project also selected two individuals to complete its in-country international staff. They are:

Mr. Bernard Ryan, Chief of Party

Mr. Ryan will contribute overall management and coordination of assuring the delivery of the required items of the work plan, represent the Project at meetings, advise the CTO and SUNY office in Albany of all appropriate decision needed to be made at their level, and provide input on same, review and verify needed expenditures under the Contract and work plan, and have responsibility for major policy, programmatic, and administrative decisions made at the Project level.

Mr. Glenn Sarka, Senior Public Advocacy Specialist

Mr. Sarka will have primary responsibility for the civic education and outreach efforts under the Contract and work plan. These efforts are a major component of the Contract and work plan and are a primary method of providing Afghans with an awareness of the institution of the National Assembly, and the roles and responsibilities of the Afghans and Assembly. He will be responsible for conducting training, public education, and delivering technical assistance to the appropriate Assembly Secretariat departments, the local NGO community whose functions include legislative activities, Assembly members, and the media. This education and training is necessary for the Assembly to fulfill its roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Ryan and Mr. Sarka are expected to arrive in Kabul in early April.

Other administrative issues during the quarter include:

- An internal Network with IP addresses was developed and completed.
- A health insurance plan was finalized with home office and contract signed with ex+Med.
- Contracts of all APAP Staff were signed and submitted to Albany home office
- The contract with the Security Company (USPI) was finalized and signed.
- Major repairs for the APAP residence were completed.
- APAP Bank accounts in \$US and Afs were established at the Standard Charter Bank (SCB)
- An account for ARD at the SCB was established.
- The financial records were completed, including vouchering, cashbooks and bankbooks and pay slips.

PART 6: FINANCIAL REPORT

Attached for review